

CONNEXUS

A Magazine for Alberta Government Managers

Summer 2000 Edition

INSIDE



Robb Stoddard
Setting the Course
Page 3

Meet AGent...

More Convenience, Access, Control

AGent—Alberta Government Employee Net—is a government-wide employee self-service project that will provide you, as a member of the Alberta public service, the ability to view and eventually update your own personal employment information through an internet Web site. It's one way we will conduct business differently and more efficiently for you.

☐ AGent is your window for HR and payroll information.

☐ AGent gives you quick and convenient access to your data.

☐ You will be able to view and manage your own personal employment background to ensure it's current and accurate.

☐ You don't have to be a computer whiz to use AGent and you won't need to have your own computer. Solutions will be available to employees without computer or Internet access.

☐ AGent will create a workplace where you have greater control in managing your own personal employment information and

accessing other information that keeps you in the know.

☐ There will be cost savings and efficiencies associated with reduced payroll inquiries, data entry, paperwork, and filing. This will free up HR staff to work on more focused, business-oriented tasks.

Security?

☐ The security of your data is paramount. AGent's security features will ensure that your information remains confidential.

☐ An outside security consultant is reviewing the current security system and setting up appropriate security for

AGent, including rigorous intrusion tests.

☐ You will have your own identification and password.

Why?

☐ AGent reflects the government's commitment to leadership in the use of information technology. It's one way of taking advantage of what the Web can do for us.

☐ AGent is more than a technical solution. It is a way of supporting a progressive, self-sufficient workforce through the effective use of technology.

☐ Our government has an innovative vision that leverages technology to deliver services and provide access to information.

☐ AGent supports the public service as one employer, with more standardized processes, policies and business practices—creating more efficiency.



Page 4-5



Elaine Dougan
Directory 2000

Page 8

PLUS MUCH MORE . . .

Find Connexus on the
Personnel Administration
Office Web site under
Management Information

www.gov.ab.ca/pao

Self-Service

CONNEXUS

is published in print and online by the Personnel Administration Office. Its purpose is to keep managers in the Alberta public service informed about current policies, goals and programs.

It serves to provide managers with information to assist in their individual development and that of the Alberta public service.

The views expressed in **CONNEXUS** are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Personnel Administration Office, nor does publishing them imply endorsement. The editorial policy for this magazine is set out in a document approved by the Public Service Commissioner. A copy can be obtained from the Editor.

Readers' comments and suggestions are welcome and should be sent to:

Editor
CONNEXUS
7th Floor
Peace Hills Trust Tower
10011 - 109 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3S8
Fax: (780) 422-5428

EDITORIAL BOARD

Peter Tadman
Communications Director
Personnel Administration Office
peter.tadman@gov.ab.ca

Brigitte Fulgham
Executive Director, Human Resources, Infrastructure

Sanda Gheorghiu
Manager, Medical Services, Economic Development

Mat Hanrahan
Assistant Deputy Minister
Learning

James McLaughlin
Director, Southern Region
Justice

Alberta
PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE

Meet AGent... *continued*

Who's Involved?

- ☐ The project team consists of employees from many departments and external specialists in areas such as security.
- ☐ There will be a ministry implementation team in each ministry, sponsored by your human resources director.
- ☐ We have a steering committee which includes human resource directors from eight departments and representatives from the Personnel Administration Office (PAO), the Alberta

Corporate Service Centre (ACSC), and Payment Systems Corporation (PSC).

- ☐ Public Service
Commissioner Jim Dixon is our executive sponsor.

How will this all happen?

- ☐ First and most importantly, we will focus on making sure you know what's going on, every step of the way.
- ☐ We will introduce AGent a bit at a time and you'll have opportunities to provide your input at each stage.

When will it take effect?

AGent will be made available in seven stages over the next two to three years. Each ministry will implement this new employee self-service system at its own pace. ■

The AGent project began in April and its Web site with information about the project has been available since June. Want to know more?

Check out: www.AGent.gov.ab.ca

Send an e-mail to:
Agent-info@gov.ab.ca

Call **Yummoi Gee** at the AGent project at: **(780) 415-1374**

Ask your human resources director

Stage	Available	Ministries begin implementation
1	employees can view their own employment information (i.e. personal, job, and paycheque)	August 2000
2	employees can view their own benefits information	October 2000
3	employees can update their own basic personal information (i.e. address change)	March 2001
4	employees can update their own benefits information. First Choice enrolment is available on the AGent site for management and opted-out employees	June 2001
5	employees can update remaining personal information (i.e. mid-month advance, direct deposits, beneficiaries)	October 2001
6	salaried staff can do time entry on the AGent site	January 2002
7	wage staff can do time entry on the AGent site	July 2002

AGent
Employee Net

Watch for it, it's coming!

Setting the Course...

In a recent speech to Alberta government information technology (IT) professionals, Janet Caldwell, director of the IBM institute for electronic government, said that asking "What does it take to become an e-government?" is really the same as questioning 50 years ago "What does it take to become an industrial state?"



Chief Information Officer Robb Stoddard

Technology is changing the way we work and communicate. As a result, organizations of all sizes are investigating new and innovative ways to use technology to deliver programs more effectively and efficiently.

With that in mind, we have been working diligently to prepare a corporate strategy for information management and technology to ensure that all Albertans get the most benefit from their investment in government IT.

Leading the charge in this direction is Chief Information Officer Robb Stoddard. "We see information management and information technology as a key tool to address our business needs," he says. "But we have to be careful that it is not a solution looking for a problem. Just because we can, doesn't mean we should."

Indeed, understanding and appreciating when, where and how to use and invest in new technology is crucial to maintaining standards throughout government, according to Stoddard.

"It isn't enough for us as a government to simply keep pace with advancements in technology," he notes. "We need to use technology in the most effective ways to improve services for Albertans."

He notes that in recent years, the government has taken many positive steps to

restructure its approach to service delivery to Albertans, including re-examining how those services are provided to citizens.

"To Albertans, we are one corporate entity, not individual ministries with individual objectives," says Stoddard. "The way we are structured to do the business of government is not what's important to our customer."

"... understanding and appreciating when, where and how to use and invest in new technology is crucial to maintaining standards throughout government."

What's important is that we get the job done. And that job is to meet the needs of Albertans."

And those needs are changing. According to Statistics Canada, Alberta has the highest percentage of people connected to the Internet compared to any other province in Canada. As a result, Albertans are demanding more choice, remote access, consistency and ease of use of technology to meet their needs.

"Albertans are online and becoming more and more technologically savvy," says Stoddard. "But we aren't going to evolve to the next stage in governance by simply putting everything online. It goes beyond that."

This includes allowing people better access to more customized information through their desktop, rather than searching around, going to different libraries or ministries to try and find an answer.

"Technology has the potential of drastically changing how we work with citizens," says Stoddard. "But it will also change the way that we as a government work internally."

According to Stoddard, the purpose of the strategy on information management and information technology is to provide ministries with a defined path to move on. He stresses that it is not intended to be an order or a directive, but rather a stated direction that government needs to go, allowing ministries to work at a department level as well as corporately.

"This is a common sense approach," says Stoddard. "What makes this approach significant and vital to our success is the fact that it is a common direction and a common path." ■

GREAT STUFF!

2000 Premier's Award of Excellence



"The challenge is in getting people to understand it's more than a recognition program."

What do dragons, fish, and over 1000 of Alberta's public service employees have in common? They all played a role in this year's record-setting Premier's Award of Excellence. On June 19 over 1200 recipients and guests attended the sixth annual awards ceremony at the Jubilee Auditorium, where Premier Ralph Klein handed out bronze, silver and gold awards in recognition of excellence in client service and business practices.

Originating in 1994, the Premier's Award of Excellence recognizes projects that meet criteria in three key categories: leadership and people focus, client and stakeholder focus and process management. This year, submissions came from 15 different departments across Alberta, outlining a diverse number of initiatives that included providing service to Edmonton's seniors, raising fish in classrooms, and identifying and tracking dangerous offenders.

According to Nancy Monaghan, coordinator of the Premier's Award of Excellence, this year's awards saw not only a record number of recipients, but also a record total of teams that made submissions. Out of 54 submissions, 36 teams were honoured.

"The challenge is in getting people to understand it's more than a recognition program," says Monaghan. "The other purpose is instilling business excellence practices in government. We're building learning about

what that means."

This year's sole gold award recipient was the Edmonton Seniors Services Centre (ESSC) team from Community Development. Over the last several years, the ESSC's services have evolved to provide comprehensive information not just for provincial programs, but for all seniors' programs, services and community supports available from a wide variety of providers. The team worked to expand services for their clients, improving accessibility, privacy and comfort for more than 100,000 seniors, caregivers and families.

What did the team learn from the awards process? According to ESSC Manager Kirsten Rains, the extra work that they'd been putting in over the last few years had always measured up to high standards. "The Edmonton Seniors Service Centre's submission was written and compiled entirely by the team," says Rains. "I think all of the members were almost as proud of how the

finished product demonstrated each of their success stories as they were of receiving the gold as a result of their award entry."

Besides the gold, 25 teams received bronze medals, including Environment's Foothills Model Forest Project Team, which created a sustainable model forest, judged to be one of the best sites in Canada; and the Aboriginal Health Strategy Team from Health and Wellness, which worked to reduce inequalities in health status. Ten teams received silver awards. Bruce Bolton from Community Development was part of the Rise of the Black Dragon Team, which received a silver for creating an exhibition of cultural treasures from China at the provincial museum. According to Bolton, one of the challenges of the project was getting the artifacts out of China, many for the first time ever. The highlight of the process? Learning about another culture. "The very best part for many of us was getting to know the Chinese people," says Bolton. "It was a life-changing experience that none of us will ever forget."

The 2000 Premier's Award of Excellence saw teams working to streamline internal processes, protect the environment, create new opportunities for people with disabilities and even extend the grazing season for Alberta's cattle. The projects and team functions may vary but the underlying goal remains the same. A commitment to their clients and a desire for quality continues to drive Alberta's public service employees to reach new heights of excellence—every single day. ■

Highlights...

- ❑ improving accessibility, privacy and comfort for more than 100,000 seniors, caregivers and families
- ❑ introducing a variety of initiatives to health and wellness resulting in a reinvestment of about \$6 million
- ❑ establishing the first urban initiative of its kind in Canada to help long term social assistance recipients make the transition to employment in the private sector
- ❑ reducing costs for industry and government by implementing a new way of administering the fuel tax on propane
- ❑ developing a means to extend the grazing season, an idea which could potentially save the agriculture industry more than \$75 million a year
- ❑ initiating part of a model forest network that has been judged to be one of the best in Canada
- ❑ updating, consolidating and streamlining several marketplace statutes into one to achieve a fair marketplace for businesses and consumers
- ❑ and creating a visually impressive gallery reflecting Alberta's past that to date has received more than 350,000 visitors.

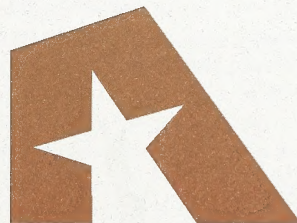


It's an Honour—Kirsten Rains and Colleen Crighton accepting the gold

Capturing the Gold...



Premier Team—The gold represents a significant accomplishment and a benchmark for others. Members of the Edmonton Seniors Service team with Premier Klein and Community Development Minister Stan Woloshyn include Dwight Ganske, Kirsten Rains (leaders), Ryana Allen, Kara Boucher, Colleen Crighton, Joanne Ebertz, Michelle Farion, Margaret Gray, Hing Lo, Laura Pretula and Leslie Sorenson.



Class of 2000

Most grads ever!



Participation in the Senior and Executive Managers' Development Program continues to grow. Twenty-three graduates were recognized at a May 31 luncheon ceremony held at the University of Alberta Faculty Club. Congratulations go out to...

George Alvarez, Human Resources and Employment

Frederick Bonnell, Children's Services

Jim Brackenbury, Learning

Steve Callahan, Infrastructure

Jane Clerk, Resource Development

Susan Cribbs, Intergovernmental Affairs

Diane Dalgleish, Infrastructure

Deryl Empson, Environment

Patrick Guidera, Environment

Christopher Holly, Resource Development

Michele Kirchner, Learning

Neil MacDonald, Health and Wellness

Cindy MacGowan, Infrastructure

Brian Magee, Municipal Affairs

Melanie McCallum, Alberta International Affairs

John McDermott, Human Resources and Employment

Ronald Muir, Infrastructure

Robert Penny, Transportation and Utilities

Ken Phillips, Children's Services

Brian Rhiness, Agriculture

Russell Stashko, Environment

Joanne Taylor, Environment

Alex Waters, Infrastructure

The program has just wrapped up its most successful year with the largest graduating class ever. Organizers are gearing up for another busy season. To meet increased demand, second offerings will be made of a number of the program modules.

This was also the inaugural year for the very successful Management Development Program which was developed for Alberta public service professionals. To meet growing demand, several repeat offerings of the modules were scheduled last year and three additional ones have since been added for the upcoming year. If there is sufficient demand, some modules will be offered in Calgary.

Information and dates for the 2000/2001 programs will be available by the end of August. More details can be found in Upcoming on Page 8. ■

More information can also be accessed at Web sites:

www.gov.ab.ca/sem dp for the Senior & Executive Managers' Development Program

www.gov.ab.ca/mdp for the Management Development Program

Shared Services...

Transition Underway

June 12, 2000, marked the day that the Alberta Government began transitioning into a new way of delivering administrative, financial, human resources and information technology services across departments.

Assuming joint management responsibility for the staff who are currently involved in delivering services was seen as the best way to ensure that services remain stable during the transition, allowing the ACSC good access to knowledge, expertise and know-how.

Approximately 700 staff were assigned to work with the ACSC in mid-June. An interim management/supervisory structure has been put in place and information sessions are being held on a regular basis.

The summer months are going to be busy for the ACSC and the departments it will serve. The proposal call for business process improvements/re-engineering closed on July 5 and the successful consultant is expected to start work soon. A commitment was made to involve staff in reshaping the way services are delivered and the ACSC will be calling upon resources from throughout government to provide valuable input into the process.

Next, the ACSC is getting ready to transition the remainder of the regional operations on September 5. Resource identification can be



"...the important thing is that the transition is underway, going smoothly and employees are showing creativity, enthusiasm and a positive commitment to change."

a little more complex as regional staff often have more cross-over of responsibilities, but departments are committing best efforts to ensure that shared service delivery in a regional environment will also be a success.

Other priorities include entering into memoranda of understanding with departments to begin establishing business relationships during this transition year. Service level agreements for next year are also being developed and this means that work on standards, service levels, costing, pricing, forecasting and accounting must be well underway. Department managers are going to play a critical role in this exercise.

While there are many more activities going on, the important thing is that the transition is underway, going smoothly and employees are showing creativity, enthusiasm and a positive commitment to change. ■

Hitting the Mark...

Imagine you've just moved to a city about the size of Grande Prairie. Who's going to hook up your services? Where do you go? Well—you'll likely reference your most valuable resource, the local telephone directory.

And, things are not much different for those who work for, or do business with, the Government of Alberta.

"Our customers told us they wanted a more complete resource," says Elaine Dougan, director of the RITE telephone service at the Public Affairs Bureau. "They wanted greater detail on the structure of government ministries and expanded listings for regional offices

across the province. They asked and we delivered."

The most comprehensive listing produced since the initial government directory came off the press in 1976 has over 25,000 listings, more than 500 pages and combines the previously separate Government of Alberta RITE directory and the Employee RITE directory.

New Government of Alberta Telephone Directory 2000

Customer feedback shows great appreciation for the new directory and its many new features. "I am really pleased to see the alphabetical listing of areas in each department," says a frequent user. "This is a very important piece of information that will be used daily."

"Without doubt, the biggest challenge is keeping the directory up-to-date," says Dougan. "We needed a team effort and that's exactly what we got, especially from our directory contacts from each area within government."

The traditional paper copy isn't going to disappear anytime soon, despite the availability of an online directory on the Government of Alberta Web site (www.gov.ab.ca/directory). "It's convenient to have the directory on the Internet. It helps fill a void," says Dougan. "But the two versions complement each other."

Like the paper version, the new online telephone directory is redesigned to make searching more user friendly and comprehensive. The site also includes

useful listings of programs and services, helping users efficiently find the information they need. The new online directory even allows employees the ability to request changes to their own information right over the net. ■

UPCOMING

On September 5, the University of Alberta will begin accepting registrations through your department's human resource office for the highly recommended **Senior and Executive Managers' Development Program**. Participants are encouraged to register early in September.

Get Ready Alberta—strengthening the Alberta advantage. Watch for a feature story in the fall edition of *Connexus*.

To change your mailing label address, please correct and return it to the payroll area of your department's human resources office for update in the IMAGIS database.



The **New** Government of Alberta
Telephone Directory 2000

Now in one convenient source

\$10

order your copy today

\$7 each for orders of 50 copies or more
(Government office price)

- Telephone numbers
- Fax numbers
- Email addresses
- Specific programs and services
- Government listings
- Individual staff members . . . and more

mail, email, phone or fax:

Email qp@gov.ab.ca **Telephone** 780/427-4952 **Fax** 780/452-0668

Queen's Printer Bookstore
11510 Kingsway Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5G 2Y5